



## **FACILITATING FAMILY LEARNING ON WORK & LIFE BALANCE**

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# **STATE OF ART REVIEW**

***Family - friendly policies and practices at workplaces  
in Finland, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania and UK***

**2010**

This Report has been developed by international partnership, including:



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[www.family-learning.eu](http://www.family-learning.eu)

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## About the project

The problem of work-life balance is still faced by many families and often results in withdrawal of one of family members, usually women, from the labour market. Despite some employers' initiatives to make family-friendly workplaces, they aren't widely spread and recognized in EU countries. That's why it is important to raise awareness on necessity of bottom-up approach encouraging involvement of employees themselves in implementing family-friendly initiatives within their workplaces.

**Project aims** to develop an innovative approach to family learning on work-life balance. It seeks to develop the capacity of the employees to lobby for implementation of family-friendly measures at workplaces and as a result, to remain active on the labour market.

### **Project's target groups:**

- learners-family members having problems in work and life balance;
- adult educators- family consultants on work and life balance;
- adult education organizations, trade unions, workers' unions, family associations, NGOs, interested to use the prepared training material for their clients.

### **Project outcomes:**

- **State of Art Review** analyzing the cases of implementation of gender equality planning at workplaces on work & life balance. It creates a base for defining the competency profile of family consultant, who works with family members having problems to reconcile work and family life.
- The multi-language **Collection of Good Practices** based on personal reflection of the employees who have benefited from the family-friendly measures offered by their employer:
  - **brochure "Best practices on work & life balance"**
  - **set of video-clips on DVD**
- **e-Handbook on DVD "Family learning on work & life balance"** with innovative training modules for family learning on work-life balance. It aims to help learners to develop their social and civic competences in the area of gender equality, family-friendly workplaces and work-life balance.
- The **Guidelines for Family Consultant** how to organize trainings on work-life balance for working family members and to encourage their active involvement in implementing family-friendly initiatives within their workplaces.

### **Main results:**

- 160 family members trained on work & life balance issues;
- 50 family members received personal consultations on work & life balance;
- 400 families encouraged for self-learning on family-friendly measures;
- 16 family consultants prepared to work with families having work & life balance problems;
- 70 adult educators and other social partners acquainted with the role of family consultant on work & life balance.

## Introduction

The state of art report is a part of the project entitled *Facilitating family learning on work-life balance* (FAMILY) which is designed to develop an innovative approach to family learning on work-life balance and to increase the capacities of employees to contribute themselves to implementation of family-friendly initiatives at workplaces.

Reconciliation of family and work roles has recently gained a particular popularity in public policy debates across Europe. The concept refers to a number of qualitative changes in contemporary societies, such as increasing labour market participation of women, changing family forms and the demographic decline, which play a crucial role in social organization of work. Countries differ in their policy responses, sometimes stressing the need for more flexible working arrangements, sometimes encouraging the supply of care services or focusing on a more equal distribution between paid and unpaid work.

The main aim of this Report is to contribute to developing content of training modules for learners and prepare recommendations for quality standards of respective training materials for both learners and family consultants.

To achieve this main goal the Report is defined in to four parts.

The first part consists of overview of the policies targeted towards the reconciliation agenda in partner countries (Finland, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania and United Kingdom). Reconciliation policies can be defined as policies that directly support the combination of professional, family and private lives. This part of the report is focused on national public policies with regard to diverse leave facilities, care services, flexible working arrangements or training/retraining of employees, who return to labour market after a break due to family reasons.

The second part of the report presents the cases of good practices on effective implementation of family-friendly measures at workplaces in all partner countries. This part discusses the provisions that emerge at company level as organizations may either supplement public provisions and services or other family-friendly measures at workplace.

The third part of the report discusses the quality standards for training modules and competency profile of family consultant on work and life balance.

The fourth part consists of the recommendations for content for the training program for learners.

The state of art report is prepared on the basis of national reports that have been developed by each partner country. The structure of country reports reflects main areas of investigation provided in unified template (see Annex 1). The information on national contexts is based on the analysis of documents, statistical data, and interviews with national experts.

**This document has been prepared and published in 2009. Please check for the current updates in legislation in each countries mentioned herein.**

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## I. Reconciliation of work and private life in Finland, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania and UK

The policies targeted towards the reconciliation agenda in different countries may have different aims and aim at different provisions. The ***seven main aims*** can be briefly summarized. One is the ***reduction of long working hours incompatible with parenting and family life***. Such reductions may take a wide variety of forms, be based on statutory provisions or locally bargained agreements as well as have different implications for pay, working conditions and gender (MacInnes 2006). The second goal is ***to facilitate different leave schemes and arrangements (paternity leave, maternity leave, parental leave, etc.)***. These two time-related provisions imply a reduction in the labour supply (at least in the short term) and are usually granted to parents to facilitate their caring responsibilities. The next three goals of work-life balance and reconciliation policies are, conversely, aimed at ***increasing labour supply through provision of childcare services, 'flexible' working time arrangements and training/retraining of employees to facilitate their return to labour market after the break due to family reasons***. The last two goals are more general. The most frequently cited goal of reconciliation policies is to ***overcome gender segregation of labour market and unequal share of domestic labour***. Finally, one more goal, discussed by MacInnes (2006, 226), "has been ***to secure the long-term labour supply and to avoid the fiscal and economic consequences of 'population ageing' by facilitating specifically fertility sustaining family life.***"

This report will provide an overview of national policies with regard to leave facilities, care services, flexible work arrangements and training /retraining of employees who return to labour market after the break.

### 1.1 Paternity/maternity/child care leaves

Since June 1996, national policy in the field of leave arrangements has been underpinned by the COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 96/34/EC of 3 June 1996 on the framework agreement on parental leave concluded by UNICE, CEEP and the ETUC of the European Council which obliges Member States to introduce legislation on parental leave that will enable parents to care full-time for their child over a period of three months. In principle this refers to an individual, non-transferable entitlement. This directive ensures that a certain minimum standard is guaranteed within the Member States. Over and above this, however, there is a broad range of national regulation with countries differing as to payments, duration, and entitlement (Reconciliation, 2005).

Below the leave facilities in six project partner countries are presented. Those countries have adopted diverse and flexible models of parental leaves in order to develop the more flexible relationship of young parents with labour market and more active men's involvement in childcare.

All countries grant to mothers **maternity leave**, which differs in duration and level of support. Maternity leave in Finland lasts 18 weeks, Germany – 14 weeks, Italy - up to 20 weeks, Latvia – 16 weeks, Lithuania – 18 weeks, in UK the maternity leave extends for 52 weeks after the birth of the child. The maternity leave is usually provided before and after the birth of the child. In Germany, Latvia and Lithuania the period is extended for the number of days that the child was born earlier. In Finland the *special maternity leave* can be granted on the order of a medical doctor if an expectant mother works under conditions that may be harmful to the unborn child, and if she cannot be assigned alternative work. The take up of maternity leave in all countries is almost universal.

The duration of **parental leave** in all countries differs substantially, ranging from three years of protected leave for a two-parent family in Germany, over two years in Lithuania and one year in United Kingdom (80 weeks), Italy (69 weeks) and Latvia and over six months' leave in Finland (48 weeks) (Ray, R. et al 2009). The parental leave can be used by either parent or can be shared. In Finland there is a possibility for *partial parental leave*. In this case both parents make an agreement with their employer on the shortening of the working time and on corresponding reduction of the salary by 40-60 percent for at least two months consecutively. Parents on partial parental leave may look after their child either on alternate days or in alternate weeks, or with one parent looking after the child in the mornings, and the other in the afternoons. A second key dimension of parental leave is whether it is paid, and if so, how generously. Payments are wage-related in Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Latvia and Finland. In Lithuania the amount of the parental leave allowance from the end of the maternity leave until the child turns 1 year old makes up to 100 %, and until the child turns 2 years old – 85 per cent of the allowance beneficiary's reimbursed remuneration. In Latvia the parental benefit makes up to 70% of the person's average insurance premium salary but not less than 63 LVL (~90€) until the child turns 1 year old. To compare the rest of the countries, the figures from the report *Parental Leave policies in 21 countries: Assessing Generosity and Gender Equality* (Ray, R. et al 2009) can be cited. In this report the comparisons across countries with complex systems of fully-paid, partially-paid and unpaid leave are based on the Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) paid leave indicator, which is calculated as the wage replacement rate multiplied by the duration of leave. Germany provides the most FTE paid leave: 42 weeks. Finland offers 32 weeks, Italy -25 weeks, UK - 13 weeks of full – time equivalent paid leave. In addition, the parental leave can be organized as an individual or family right. If parental leave is based on family right, parents are in position to decide who will make use of the parental leave allocated to the family. In Lithuania, the parental leave is a right of a family and women account for the absolute majority of recipients of parental leave (96 % in 2008). The frame of family right provides no incentives for men to opt for such leaves. In Germany there are two models that families usually follow. Model 1: The mother is on leave and does not work while the father works full-time (60,1 % of families). For 0,2 % of the families the

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situation is reverse. Model 2: The mother is on leave and works part-time (two to 30 hours a week) while the father works full-time (32,2%). In the absolute majority of cases, the parental leave is taken by women. In Italy, less than 5% of fathers apply for parental leave.

The involvement of fathers in care of small children can be promoted by special arrangements, like **paternity leave** or other specific regulations. In Finland the fathers are entitled to paternity leave, which ranges from 1-18 week days. It can be taken during the maternity or parental leave in up to four stages, whereby fathers stay at home with the mother. Fathers can have a special *paternity or Daddy month*: if the father takes two last weeks of the parental leave, he is entitled to receive paternity leave benefit for additional 1-12 week days. The paternity month is extended with two extra weeks beginning at 2010. The paternity month must be held uninterrupted, by then the mother has in most cases returned back to work. In Latvia fathers can take 10 days of paternity leave up to child's 2 month age. The socially insured fathers receive 100% compensation of the average wage calculated from the six month period income. In Lithuania the paternity leave is entitled to men only from the day of childbirth until the child is 1 month old. The amount of paternity allowance makes 100 % of the allowance beneficiary's reimbursed remuneration. According to the data of the Department of Statistics of 2008, the paternity allowances have been granted to 46 % of fathers (36 % in 2007) in Lithuania. In UK the paternity leave is available for fathers for 2 weeks within a 52 week period of the birth of their child and is unpaid.

The different studies talk about the factors, which determine the take up rates of parental and paternity leaves. The level of payment is an important factor. It also partially effects which of the parents will take up parental leave. Another important factor is organizational culture. In many countries women are expected to take care of children irrespective of their income. This normative model underlies organisational cultures. Thirdly, the flexibility should be mentioned. In many countries the flexible arrangements of leave enable parents to take care of their children and stay in the labour market simultaneously or to take up leaves in periods (Germany, Finland, Italy, Lithuania, UK, Latvia). The labour market sector also plays an important role. More generally, the public sector usually gives to parents more security, more flexibility and higher payment level during parental leave. Finally, take up rates are also dependent on job guarantees for employees taking up parental leave. For example in Finland or Lithuania the employee taking family leaves is entitled to return to his or her former duties at work. If such work is no longer available, he or she must be offered work of a similar kind. The employee may not be given a notice of work termination while pregnant, nor after the employee has expressed the intention to take family leaves or if he or she is on family leave.

The national regulations regarding parental leaves may be extended by companies, both with regard to the length of the leave as well as to the level of payment. In Lithuania, Latvia and many other countries in Europe the involvement of employers is limited or

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not known. In Germany some employers extend or complement the prevailing regulations, i.e. offer the paternity leave. In Italy an increasing number of collective agreements provide for full pay of maternity benefits. In UK the employers seem to be an important player in the provision of care as well.

The provisions of parental leave arrangements as a major reconciliation strategy encounters several problems related to equal opportunities. The fact that leave regulations imply by definition distance from labour market and instead facilitate care time, makes these regulations sensitive to the risk of reinforcing traditional role share related to care and work. There is a vast difference, probably the biggest in Europe, in the take up of leave between women and men in Lithuania, Latvia and Italy. Secondly, the duration of the leave taken up by men is in most cases shorter, thus less pronounced in the labour market impact. Women are under much higher risk to damage their career paths and loose earnings. Thirdly, women encounter many more problems at re-employment stage. Even though the return rate of female leave takers is relatively high, a part of them continues on a part time basis after return, others are left outside the labour market. The involvement of men in childcare should be promoted by specific arrangements based on individualized rights. The fathers' use of parental leave is particularly low if parental leave is organized along family lines and not well-paid (Reconciliation 2005).

## 1.2 Institutional child care services, care services for elderly or family members with disabilities

At the 2002 Barcelona summit the European Council agreed that Member States should strive to provide childcare by 2010 to at least 90% of children between 3 years old and the mandatory school age and at least 33 % of children under 3 years of age. In the majority of EU countries the supply of high quality and affordable childcare facilities is still insufficient.

In **Finland** the **childcare** is framed as a social right (in Denmark and Sweden as well). The municipal day care system, which was established in the beginning of 1996, guarantees a day-care place for all children under school age. The monthly fee depends on the size of the family and its gross earnings. As an alternative to municipal day care, since 1997, the parents can choose private day care and are entitled to an allowance or a voucher to cover part of the private day care costs. The share of private institutions, parishes and NGO organizations providing alternative forms of care is about 10 %. Before starting the primary school, children can take part in the *preschool*. Nearly all six-year olds attend the preschool.

In **Germany** children at the age of 3 until school age have a legal claim for a place in a kindergarten (four hour a day). Opening times and costs for the services are very different in the German Laender (states). There are still strong differences in coverage

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rates between West and East Germany. The centre-based crèche services are available for 14,6% of children aged up to 3 years in Western Germany and 46% - in Eastern Germany. The kindergarten services are available for about 92% of children from the age of 3 to 6 in the West (22,7% all-day services) and 95,1% in the East (65,3% all-day services). The after-school-services are available for 5,3 % of children aged 6 to 10 in Western Germany and 42,1% - in Eastern Germany. There is an urgent need for more places, especially for children under the age of 3, and full-day services in Western Germany. The prices for public childcare differ between communities and regions and are massively subsidised by tax payments.

In **Italy** each region and municipality has its own specific policy provisions regarding the childcare. As for the childcare services, municipalities are in charge of crèches for children up to 3 years and nursery schools (3 to 6 years). However, the number of crèches is insufficient to cover the family demand and waiting lists are usually very long. Only 7% of children under 3 years enjoy the public childcare services while the percentage grows up till 100% for upper age children (3-4 years - 98% and 5-6 years - 100%). The price for childcare facility is income-related and differs between municipalities and regions. The lack of institutional care services is counterbalanced by inter-generational ways of human solidarity (family members). Private structures (nurseries and baby parkings) also offer services, but too expensive for less well-off families. The policy of in-company crèches (promoted by the law n. 53 of 8 March 2000) is still scarcely carried out. According to a recent survey of the National Observatory on the Family in 2005, the big companies have started to set up more adequate inside services, mostly in the centre of Italy (66,6%) and in the northern regions (33,3%). Since the current year, the Italian government has allocated 25 millions Euros for a pilot project aimed at opening internal crèches in public offices.

Since 1990s parents in **Latvia** and **Lithuania** have been suffering lack of adequate and qualitative care facilities for children of preschool age. The number of children who attended child care institutions had been decreasing from 1990 till 1993. Since then, the demand for childcare institutions has been increasing; however, it cannot satisfy the current supply. The childcare institutions are mostly state funded. The attendance of child care facilities is particularly low among children under 3 years old and in rural areas. According to the Central Statistic Bureau of Latvia, the enrollment rate of children up to 3 years in institutional childcare services is 16 %, the enrollment rate of children age 3 up to 6 years – 82 %. According to Lithuanian statistical data of 2008, the enrolment rate in pre-school establishments for children up to 3 years old was 23 % (in urban areas – 32 %, in rural areas - 6 %), for children aged 3-6 the enrolment rate was 75% in 2008. The prices for childcare facilities are set by the providers of services – local authorities. The shortage of childcare institutions, especially in rural areas, as well as cultural norms regarding motherhood (widespread belief that women should raise children up to 3 years at home) limit the use of public day care centres. In the context of these problems, the National program on the Development of Pre-school

Education (2007-2012) has been adopted in Lithuania. It outlines the concrete actions and obligations related to the enlargement, flexibility and quality of pre-school child care services in Lithuania.

In **United Kingdom** there has been significant growth in the provision of childcare and increasing development of the childcare market and workforce over the past 10 years. This was driven by the 2004 Children Act and then the Childcare Act of 2006 which made provision for financial support for parents and charged local authorities to ensure an adequate level of childcare services to support working parents and to encourage other parents back into work. This was driven by a commitment to raise all children out of poverty by the target date of 2020, thus encouraging parents to join the workforce and ensure the economic stability of their family. In addition the goal of raising the levels of academic attainment of children meant that additional early learning opportunities were made available to children under the age of 5 years. Financial support was made available to parents in the form of 'working tax credits' and 'child tax credits', and some employers invested in a 'childcare voucher' scheme as well as receiving incentives to support employee's childcare costs. In addition free education was made available to all 3 and 4 year olds. The growth of the childcare industry in UK has seen a mixed provision of services offered by the private, voluntary and independent sectors across all local authorities in the form of pre-school, nursery and play groups, child-minding, and extended schools services including breakfast and after-school clubs. The local authorities have also steadily increased the support available to many marginalised and excluded families by developing services to support parents through the creation of Sure Start Children's Centres in communities across the country; the target is to provide 3500 such Centres by 2010. It has meant a big increase in the amount and flexibility of support for parents with young families wanting to stay in, or return to work. However, there is evidence of overprovision in some localities, not enough in others, and the childcare available is not always targeted to the right families of available at the right time. However social trends have shown increases in the numbers of families with two parents working, and also an increased representation of single parents in the workforce.

Providing **care services for the elderly** is becoming a big issue in Europe due to the rapid ageing of the population. Moreover, care for the elderly or disable family member is growingly becoming an important aspect of reconciliation policies. Today 8 % of the population in Finland belongs to the age group of 75 and over (in 2020 the corresponding share will be 10 %, and in 2030 it is estimated to be 14, 5 %). In Finland the typical norm for the elderly people is to live independently at home. This arrangement concerns also those aged 85 and over. It is often their wish to stay at home as long as possible. New technological devices, such as elder-friendly care phones and other facilities, have been created to support the independent living of older people. As their age increases, more regular care is needed. The municipalities are obliged to arrange elder care but their resources are not enough to satisfy all growing

needs. The care for the elderly people is not legislated as a subjective right like the childcare for the children under the school age. In most cases the care is provided by the family members. According to a survey by Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, 20 % of working women and 15 % of men provided care for their own or their spouse's parents in 2009. This care-giving was most typical in the age group of 45-54 (women 25%, men 18%). Because of the ageing population, there is a discussion whether the elder care leave for family members should be legislated along the same lines as the parental leave is legislated for parents of young children.

In 2007, 2.25 million people were in need of care in Germany. Two-thirds of them are cared for at home. From those, about half are cared for only by a family member, one-third use outpatient care services (in addition). One third of all persons in need of care live in a nursing home.

In **Italy**, the offer of public social services for elderly or family members with disabilities (for example, assistance at home, community centre, economic grants) and structures are often under the demand. In most cases the care is provided by the family members. Private sector has a relevant role in this field also referring to the increasing number of old people in the country. Each region and municipality has its own specific approach and policy provisions regarding the social support and care for the elderly.

Care services for elderly or family members with disabilities are set by legislation of **Latvia**. Rest-houses or care service centers for elderly people are financed partly by Municipality and person's monthly fee. Till 2009 the services did not satisfy the demand therefore the Municipalities promoted alternative informal care services at homes. Due to recent economic hardships in the state, the demand for public services decreased. Family members take their relatives out of the care centers because in many cases seniors' pension is single income for the family or family members cannot afford to pay for relatives' care services.

The care services for elderly in **Lithuania** are provided by local municipalities and their established Centres of social services (those centres are state funded). One of the services - assistance at home (so called social care) - is provided for no more than 10 hours a week, which is obviously not enough for people with heavy disabilities. However there is an increasing number of people with disabilities who require a wider range of services than the Centres can provide. Social services for elderly are also provided in community centres, of which there are more than 90 in Lithuania, as well as in day care centres for disabled (of which there are approx. 90). These numbers are too low to meet the demand of elder or disabled people. The care obligation limits the abilities of family members to work and to balance family-work roles.

The Law governing Adult Social Care in the **United Kingdom**, which provides a legislative framework for adult residential care, community care and support for carers has developed in a piecemeal pattern since the introduction of the National Assistance

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Act in 1948. In order to develop a new model for Social Care, in 2009 the Department of Health launched a new consultation Green Paper entitled 'Shaping the Future of Care Together'. The aim is to meet the challenges of people living longer, by reforming the system of adult care and to develop a National Care Service that is fair, simple and affordable to everyone; 'a care and support service fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century'. Currently in the UK care is provided by the national and local authorities, private companies and voluntary organisations. The provision of care in hospitals, care homes and people's own homes is regulated by the Care Quality Commission whose aim is to ensure good quality care is available to everyone. The 'personalisation' of adult care has had growing support in the UK since the Community Care Act 1990, leading to the publication of 'Putting People First' in 2007 and the 2008 Carers' Strategy. An important outcome from this new guidance has been the development of 'direct payments', allowing people to arrange their own care, buying services to meet their needs instead of receiving services from their local authority. Help and support is increasingly available to carers, this includes anyone who looks after a friend, relative or neighbour who needs support because of their age, sickness or disability. This can include support in looking after someone whilst continuing in employment, financial support in the form of benefit payments or the opportunity to take a break from caring to look after your own health and well-being.

### 1.3 Flexible working-time arrangements

Flexible working hours may be an important condition for employees to reconcile work with private life.

Part-time has been one of the most well-known options. The evidence exists that women are mostly subject to different forms of part-time arrangement, thus are subject to economic dependence (inequality in terms of income, responsibility and power) which part time implies. Recently the more individualised flexible working hours for women and men are becoming more widespread and act as an important substitute for part-time work. In most European countries the flexible working arrangements are settled at the level of enterprise (Reconciliation, 2005). Below the specific national situations are overviewed.

In **Finland** the part-time work<sup>1</sup> is relatively rare if compared with other EU countries. One of the explanations given for *so few women* in Finland working part-time is the prevailing culture of full-time employment. The high quality day-care system combined with arranged school meals for school children are named as other factors that make it possible for working women to work full-time. In 2008, 12 % of and 5 % of men were registered as part-time employees in Finland, while women's own reporting, based on

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<sup>1</sup> Part-time work in Finland is defined as less than 30 hours per week.

employees' own perceptions about whether they work part-time or not, was 15 % and men's 7 %.

Employees' *possibilities to influence their on working hours* have increased during the last decades. A survey carried out in 1984 showed that one third of employees had possibilities for influencing starting and/or finishing times of work by at least 30 minutes. In 2008, the situation was completely the opposite: two out of three were able to influence their own starting and finishing times. According to the same survey, for about 60 % of the employees it is *easy to leave the workplace to run personal errands*. This is somewhat easier for men (72 %) than for women (50 %). The occupational groups where it is most difficult to leave the workplace to run personal errands are typically female-dominated sectors like health care, social work, service work and educational jobs.

Working hours can be flexible in that people take their work home. This type of work has different names according to its arrangement. *Remote or tele-working* is a form of work which is done either partly or entirely at home by using a computer or other information technology. An alternative expression is *e-work*, a reference to a wider use of IT and communications technology. Also expressions '*decentralized*' or '*mobile work*' are used. People do e-work and tele-working to varying degrees both according to agreed and unofficial arrangements with the employer. About one-third of the employees (women 33 %, men 35 %) in Finland say they do work at home occasionally or partially. In 2008, 14 % of employees (women 13 %, men 14 %) were involved in teleworking - agreed arrangement with the employer to work at least some hours from home utilizing information technology<sup>2</sup>. According to the European Working Conditions Survey, 18 % of wage and salary earners in the EU27 countries say they at least sometimes telework from home using a computer. Leading countries in this regard are The Netherlands (35 %), Sweden (29 %), Denmark (26 %) and Finland (25 %).

In **Germany** the employees have a legal claim for work time arrangements and other basic conditions that allow them to reconcile work and family life. Employees in a company with more than 15 people have the right to demand a part-time job, when they have been working for the company at least for six months. The employer may reject this demand, when it clashes with the work organisation. After the change in part-time a worker has no entitlement to return to full-time work. More than one quarter of all employed persons in Germany worked on part-time basis in 2006. The most of them (82%) were women. 46% of all employed women work part-time (and only 9 % of men). In most cases, the reason for working part-time is the care for children or elderly people in need of care.

Germany is one of the countries with the highest proportion of enterprises (more than 50 percent) providing flexible working time arrangements. Many enterprises offer their employees the use of accumulated hours for longer periods of leave (21 %) or for

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<sup>2</sup> Findings of the Finnish Quality of Work Surveys. Statistics Finland, 2009.

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single days off (17%). Some offer the possibility to vary start and end of daily work but no accumulation of hours (6%). 7 % of the employees work at home on a regular basis (tele-work). In 2009, 21,9% of the enterprises offered their employees tele-work. There are rarely gender differences in this working form.

In **Italy** the law n. 53 of 8 March 2000 has established a fund of economic incentives in favour of enterprises that, in their own work contracts, are steadily steered into 'positive actions' towards flexibility (projects for parents that can use specific arrangements of flexible working hours, for example, reversible part-time, tele-working, work at home, flexible time in entry and exit, bank of time and hours, concentrated time, etc.). In spite of these incentives, most of the Italian companies (that are mainly medium/small enterprises) are reluctant to introduce types of flexible work, even the slightest ones. According to a recent European survey of 2009<sup>3</sup>, almost 50% of Italian companies are available to grant some types of flexible working time to their employees. The most spread form of flexibility to be granted by employers (slight majority of enterprises) is just the employees' changes of start-time and end-time of single workdays. Just 15% of enterprises grant to their workers the opportunity to accumulate hours including full days off. What regards the part-time work this practice is scarcely planned and used by companies (in 2008 just 20% of part time work contracts).

In short and generally speaking, working women in Italy are not supported enough by the current labour market. If they have small children usually they face two alternatives: a) to leave work at all or b) to work at full time in a fixed working time. In the last few years, however, some slight signals of change in organisation of work can be detected both in public bodies (for example, the Municipality of Venice and the Province of Genova have recently started to apply the tele-working and other family-friendly measures) and in middle/big companies (see the Coop Liguria case below).

**Latvia** has national legislation in this respect. For example, the Latvian Labor Code defines the aggregated working time, which may not exceed 56 hours a week and 160 hours within a four-week period unless otherwise provided for by a collective agreement or an employment contract. It also regulates the extension of regular daily working time, length of working week or shift work. The research by the Ministry of Welfare in Latvia shows that 76% of employers in their companies use some kind of flexible work organization; around 40% of companies have part-time workers and working from home, job sharing is practiced by 28% of companies and seasonal work is practiced by 16% of companies; 34% of employers think that flexible forms of work reduce recruitment absenteeism costs; 65% think that it offers wider recruitment option; 54% of employers agree that using of flexible forms in their work organization allow them to extend hours of operation without incurring overtime costs; 68% of

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<sup>3</sup> European Company Survey 2009 by European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.

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employers say that using of flexible work forms increases employee commitment and motivation.

In **Lithuania** flexible working time arrangements are regulated at the level of national legislation (Labour Code) as well that applies to all employees with special provisions for working parents with children under 14. Nevertheless, the incidence of flexible working time arrangements is low in the country (higher in the more qualified positions, namely intellectual and scientific occupations). It is mainly seen in the patterns of shift workers. The part-time work is more widespread in the sectors of low qualification, thus mostly among women. According to the data of the Department of Statistics in Lithuania, during the first quarter of 2009, only 9 % of women and 7 % of men worked on part-time basis in the country.

The flexible arrangements in Lithuania are usually not contractually agreed or regulated by formal policies at workplace. In many cases specific arrangements are subject to informal agreements between employer and employees. The employers are usually more responsive to women who are in need for arrangements at work due to family obligations. Such informal regulations in a way facilitate the reconciliation of family and work roles of concrete individuals at concrete workplaces, but they are based on privilege, not a right, of employees to family friendly measures at work. The political strategy aiming to promote equal opportunities at work and at home usually does not exist.

In **United Kingdom** the Employment Act of 2002 introduced new employment legislation which was designed to help parents with young and disabled children new options for leave and the 'right to request flexible working and the duty on employers to consider'. Flexible work is a phrase that describes any working pattern adapted to suit an employee's needs: part-time, flexi-time, annualised hours (working hours calculated over the period of a year), compressed hours (working agreed hours over fewer days), staggered hours (involving different starting, break and finishing times), job sharing, home-working. Anyone can ask their employer for flexible work arrangements, but the law provides some employees with the statutory right to request flexible work patterns. If you are an employee [not an agency worker], have worked for your employer continuously for 26 weeks, and have not made a request in the previous 12 months, then you have the right to ask. Under the law your employer must seriously consider any application you make, although the process of making an application and the employer considering it can take up to 14 weeks. The Government states that 'these new rights, together with existing rights to parental leave and time of for dependants, will provide parents with more choice to balance work and family life, whilst being compatible with, and beneficial to, business efficiency. It estimates that an additional 4.5 million working parents with children and carers with children under the age of 16 years will now have access to flexible working arrangements, in addition to the 6 million who already are already eligible. A recent report from the Wolfson Research Institute of research studies involving 16,000 people, found that

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mental health, blood pressure and sleep patterns were better among people who could determine their own working hours. It concluded that 'flexible working not only benefits people's family life, it is also good for their physical and mental health.'

## 1.4 Training/retraining of employees

Training/retraining of employees is considered as very significant measure of support for those who return to labour market after the break due to family reasons. Those services can be provided by different governmental, non-governmental or private institutions supported by the state, private companies or financed by various EU supported programmes.

In **Finland** there are no formal arrangements for training or retraining for employees who return back to work after a break due to family reasons. Based on a Survey on family leave policies, one in seven organisations offered some training for employees returning to work; one in five organisations offered no training. Accordingly, there is a lot of room for development of new practices to support leave taking and returning employees<sup>4</sup>.

In **Germany** the government tries to support parents who return to the labour market after parental leave with programmes, e.g. "perspective re-entry". The programme aims at women who were on leave for at least three years. While the programme is realised by the federal government and supported by the European Structural Funds (ESF), local agencies create networks to support the programme. The agencies support the women in making contacts to employers. Further, they offer trainings to renew and strengthen individual skills and knowledge.

In **Italy** there is no national legislation or procedures at national level to be looked at. Current experiences/examples are, up to now, rare and just referred to specific local context. This type of services is provided by private or public institutions with the financial support from ESF. In the case of Liguria, the Province of Genoa is in charge of this matter with a specific training programme that is mainly addressed to women. Some companies also support the employee's return to work after a middle/long break and plan a period of 'matching' on spot.

There were a few programs, supported by ESF in 2009 in **Lithuania** as well, which also stressed an importance to support the integration of socially vulnerable groups into labour market or to help them to reconcile their family and professional roles. Individuals who have had problems to return to labour market due to family reasons were among target groups as well. Many nongovernmental organizations, state institutions (like Lithuanian Labour Exchange) and private companies have been involved in diverse integration actions under support of ESF.

Recently a big attention is paid to more active labour market policies and measures of support for employment in Lithuania. In 2009 the Law on Support for Employment has been modified, which newly defined the target groups in need of extra and more active measures of support in labour market. One of them - family members, who have made

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<sup>4</sup> Family leaves and gender equality in working life. Ministry of Employment and the Economy, 24: 2009.

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breaks in their professional careers due to family reasons (child care or care for elderly or disable family members) and have had problems to return to labour market. The law anticipates different schema of subsidies for employers, who employ these persons, also subsidies for their professional training qualification raising. Practically, the implementation of the law is limited due to recent economic problems.

In **United Kingdom** the Department of Work and Pensions delivers a range of services for those looking to find or return to work via it's Jobcentre Plus offices throughout the country. Jobcentres provide the opportunity to search for a job, to seek help and advice when applying for work and to access information on planning a career. In addition Jobcentre Plus provides a range of training and development programmes, including New Deal, WorkPath, Progress2Work and Programme Centres. Programmes such as New Deal for Lone Parents and Disabled People, and the recently developed 'Flexible New Deal' operating in 40 new centres, help people back into employment, offering the opportunity to train, learn and do work experience; it provides additional support to those who have been out of work for a long time, people with disabilities, and those in need of extra help to find work. The purpose is to enable jobseekers to gain confidence, get new or improved skills, and find and stay in work.

To support people seeking or returning to work financial support in the form of Jobseekers Allowance is available, independent, free advice on financial benefits training and employment are available at Citizen's Advice Centres across the UK. Another organization - Lifelong Learning UK should be mentioned, which is responsible for the professional development of the UK workforce. It provides support in Career Guidance, Community Learning, Further Education, Higher Education and Work-Based Learning. Financial assistance to help with some of the costs of retraining is available through a range of Government Grants including Career Development Loans and Ault Learning Grants.

## II. Good practices on effective implementation of family-friendly measures at workplaces

### Fraport AG, Germany

*Presented by Technical University of Dortmund, Social Research Centre*

Fraport AG is a traffic engineering company (airport) with 12.038 employees<sup>5</sup> in Germany. 2.259 (18,7%) of the employees are female.<sup>6</sup> 17,8% the managers (at all levels) are women.<sup>7</sup>

The company received various awards for personnel policy and family-friendly practices, e.g. 'Family as a factor of success', 'audit work and family' (both for family-friendly practices), TOTAL E-QUALITY, genderdax (both for good practices in equal opportunities policy of women and men), German Top Employer 2007, 2008 and 2010, and Fair Company.<sup>8</sup> Fraport has set itself the aim to support employees in reconciling work and family life. Therefore, the company offers individual measures for the employees, and combines flexible work arrangements, including particular arrangement during parental leave, extended child care services, and information services for families.

Fraport's child care services are remarkable as they are available full-time, every day, and on short notice. Employees can leave their children (aged 1-12 years) in a child care service on the company's area. The service is adapted to the working times, and is open from 6 am to 10 pm, 365 days a year. The service costs five Euro per child and day. It is realised in cooperation with other companies. In cases of emergency, parents can also send their children who usually stay in another service to the facility. Additionally, there is a child care service for the youngest children of employees (aged eight weeks), and for other children from the city.<sup>9</sup>

The company tries to keep a connection with employees who are on parental leave. They are invited to information meetings regularly so that they are informed well when they return. Parental leave can be extended up to five years.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Fraport Sustainability Report 2009, p. 86. See URL: [http://www.fraport.de/cms/nachhaltigkeit/dokbin/415/415316.nachhaltigkeitsbericht\\_2009.pdf](http://www.fraport.de/cms/nachhaltigkeit/dokbin/415/415316.nachhaltigkeitsbericht_2009.pdf) (last access March 1,2011)

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p. 88.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> For further information see URL: [http://www.fraport.de/cms/jobs\\_karriere/rubrik/4/4384.awards@de.htm](http://www.fraport.de/cms/jobs_karriere/rubrik/4/4384.awards@de.htm) (last access March 1, 2011)

<sup>9</sup> Source: URL: [http://www.fraport.de/cms/jobs\\_karriere/dok/15/15190.familienservice@de.htm](http://www.fraport.de/cms/jobs_karriere/dok/15/15190.familienservice@de.htm) (last access March 1,2011)

<sup>10</sup> Source: URL: [http://www.fraport.de/cms/jobs\\_karriere/dok/15/15188.beruf\\_und\\_familie@de.htm](http://www.fraport.de/cms/jobs_karriere/dok/15/15188.beruf_und_familie@de.htm) (last access March 1, 2011)

Flexible work arrangements are very difficult for an airport, e.g. gliding time. Fraport however tries to offer various arrangements such as tele-work for employees who do not have to be available on the airport's area permanently, and part-time work.<sup>11</sup>

Parents and employees with family members in need of care receive assistance from a service for families. The service helps to find child care services (public services, au pair, babysitter etc.) or care services for elderly, and makes offers for children's holidays.

Herbert Mai, part of steering committee and work director, concludes: "Our investments in family friendly workplaces are profitable in an economic way. High potentials are committed to Fraport long-term. Flexible work arrangements and child care services reduce times absent."<sup>12</sup>

### **Braun Melsungen AG, Germany**

*Presented by Technical University of Dortmund, Social Research Centre*

B. Braun offers various health care and medical products and services, and has 10 077 employees in Germany (2008)<sup>13</sup>. 4410 (42%) of the employees and 2310 (22%) of all managers are female. Three of twelve members of the board of directors are women (25%).

The company received various awards for personnel policy and family friendly practices, e.g. German Top Employer 2005 and 2009, and audit berufundfamilie (for family friendly practices).<sup>14</sup> It offers flexible work arrangements, places in local child care services, and further services for families.<sup>15</sup>

B. Braun's family-related work arrangements are remarkable as they combine reduced working-times and financial support. Employees who care for a child or a family member in need of care, can claim for family-related part-time. During this period they work half-time (50%) while receiving 65% of their full-time salary. Family-related part-time is usually for three years but can be extended to five years in particular cases.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> For further information see URLs:

[http://www.fraport.de/cms/jobs\\_karriere/dok/15/15191.vereinbarkeit\\_von\\_beruf\\_und\\_privatleben@de.htm](http://www.fraport.de/cms/jobs_karriere/dok/15/15191.vereinbarkeit_von_beruf_und_privatleben@de.htm) and [http://www.fraport.de/cms/jobs\\_karriere/dok/15/15192.teleworking@de.htm](http://www.fraport.de/cms/jobs_karriere/dok/15/15192.teleworking@de.htm) (last access March 1, 2011)

<sup>12</sup> Source: URL: <http://www.erfolgsfaktor-familie.de/default.asp?id=164> (last access March 1, 2011)

<sup>13</sup> See B. Braun Annual Report 2008, p.4: URL:

[http://www.bbraun.de/documents/Press/geschaeftsbericht\\_2008.pdf](http://www.bbraun.de/documents/Press/geschaeftsbericht_2008.pdf) (last access March 1, 2011)

<sup>14</sup> For further information see URL: <http://www.bbraun.de/cps/rde/xchg/bbraun-de/hs.xsl/bbraun-als-arbeitgeber.html> (last access March 1, 2011)

<sup>15</sup> See B. Braun for Family brochure, p. 2: URL:

[http://www.bbraun.de/documents/Career/Download\\_bbraun\\_for\\_family.pdf](http://www.bbraun.de/documents/Career/Download_bbraun_for_family.pdf) (last access March 1, 2011)

<sup>16</sup> See URL: [http://www.boeckler.de/163\\_91263.html](http://www.boeckler.de/163_91263.html) (last access March 1, 2011)

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Employees who return after a long-term leave are supported by a mentoring service. The service helps to adapt to the work again, and helps to find child care services.<sup>17</sup>

The company cooperates with local parent's initiatives that offer child care services for children aged one to three years. A certain percentage of places for children of employees are reserved in local child care facilities.<sup>18</sup>

Additionally, there are offers such as a hot lunch that employees can purchase from the canteen for their family at home, low-cost cleaning and ironing services, and an ATM on the company's grounds.<sup>19</sup>

Prof. Dr. h. c. Ludwig Georg Braun, Chairman of the Managing Board, concludes: "People who have an appropriate work-life balance are more highly motivated in their everyday working lives. We give female candidates a clear signal that they are wanted – even if they plan to have a family. A recent survey showed that more than 90 percent of staff are aware of and personally support our corporate goals. The part-time models are extremely popular already. We have eleven percent part-time workers at our German sites, a figure that is much higher than the industry average."<sup>20</sup>

### Weleda, Germany

*Presented by Technical University of Dortmund, Social Research Centre*

Weleda AG offers personal hygiene products and medical products for anthroposophical therapy, and has 717 FTE-employees (2009) in Germany.<sup>21</sup> 621 (69%) of all employees are female. (For managers, there are no numbers available.)

The company was ranked as one of the top enterprises in a benchmarking-project on personnel policy (conducted by the University of Trier) in 2004 and 2005, and it received the audit berufundfamilie for a family-friendly environment (2003).<sup>22</sup> The company promises that family-related leaves and reduced working-time arrangements will not harm an employee's career. Thus, Weleda demands high social competences

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<sup>17</sup> See B. Braun for Family brochure, p. 10.

<sup>18</sup> See B. Braun for Family brochure, p. 6.

<sup>19</sup> See URL: <http://www.bbraun.de/cps/rde/xchg/bbraun-de/hs.xsl/work-life-balance.html> (last access March 1, 2011)

<sup>20</sup> Share B. Braun corporate social responsibility magazine. Issue 2008. p. 24f. See URL: [http://www.bbraun.com/documents/Company/share\\_2008\\_eng.pdf](http://www.bbraun.com/documents/Company/share_2008_eng.pdf) (last access March 1, 2011)

<sup>21</sup> Business Report 2009, p. 53. See URL: [http://www.weleda.de/media/download/GB\\_Weleda\\_2009.pdf](http://www.weleda.de/media/download/GB_Weleda_2009.pdf) (last access March 1, 2011)

<sup>22</sup> For further information see URL: <http://www.weleda.de/Unternehmen/UeberWeleda/Geschichte> (last access March 1, 2011)

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from its executives. It offers an in-house child care service, a programme for employees who are on paternity leave, and organises a network to support mutual assistance.<sup>23</sup>

There is a programme for employees who are planning paternity leave. Expectant mothers and fathers-to-be are supported from the beginning of their family period till they return to their work places.<sup>24</sup> They are offered coachings, workshops, etc.<sup>25</sup> Additionally, there is a pool of employees who are on paternity leave, which helps to find substitute in cases of sickness or holidays.

Since 1998, Weleda holds an in-house child care service that follows the pedagogical concept of Rudolf Steiner (so called "Waldorf"-child care service). The service is available for 42 children at the age of two to seven years. It is open Monday – Friday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.<sup>26</sup>

The informal "generation network" is an innovative network that helps people to reconcile work and family life.<sup>27</sup> It aims at assisting employees by mutual assistance and support the exchange and contact between people of different generations. Thus employees of different ages and retired persons participate in the network. The network offers various services, such as child care in cases of emergency, cleaning services, care for pets, shopping service, technical service etc. For instance, retired persons offer child care service for children aged one to three and school-children. In addition, the company offers the employees to order organic food from a delivery service.

Erk Schuchhardt, executive manager, says: "The 'balance of work and family life' is not a problem but a meaningful requirement and a challenge. Family life is an important social resource. I am convinced that employees do their best, when they are doing well."<sup>28</sup>

### **Windwaerts Energie GmbH, Germany**

*Presented by Technical University of Dortmund, Social Research Centre*

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<sup>23</sup> For further information see Weleda Social Report 2009 URL:  
[http://www.weleda.de/media/download/weleda\\_sozialbericht\\_2009\\_2.pdf](http://www.weleda.de/media/download/weleda_sozialbericht_2009_2.pdf) (last access March 1, 2011)

<sup>24</sup> Weleda Social Report 2009, p. 8. See URL:  
[http://www.weleda.de/media/download/weleda\\_sozialbericht\\_2009\\_2.pdf](http://www.weleda.de/media/download/weleda_sozialbericht_2009_2.pdf) (last access March 1, 2011)

<sup>25</sup> See Weleda Social Report 2009, p. 12.

<sup>26</sup> Weleda Social Report 2009, p. 10.

<sup>27</sup> For further information see Weleda Social Report 2009, p. 9.

<sup>28</sup> Cited from on URL: [http://www.erfolgsfaktor-familie.de/default.asp?id=5&d\\_id=5](http://www.erfolgsfaktor-familie.de/default.asp?id=5&d_id=5) (last access March 1, 2011)

Windwaerts is an enterprise of energy business and petroleum industry with 70 employees in Germany. 27 (38,6%) of all employees are female.<sup>29</sup> (For managers, numbers vary between 12,5 and 25% women.)

The company received various awards for family-friendly workplaces, e.g. audit berufundfamilie (2005, 2008), and awards from the local government.<sup>30</sup> The management of Windwaerts claims that reconciliation of work and family life is an important part of the company's philosophy and personnel policy. Thus, the particular needs and opportunities of realisation are considered in annual interviews with the employees.

There are various flexible working time arrangements, e.g. models for sabbaticals, tele-work, and part-time work (also for managers).<sup>31</sup> In addition, the company has introduced a model for annual working time arrangements.<sup>32</sup> Employees can be released from work due to family-related reasons. As employees can access data at home, they can work at home, e.g. when they have to stay with a sick child. In cases of emergency, parents can bring their children to the work place. They can eat at the in-house catering.<sup>33</sup>

The company informs about family-friendly arrangements via intranet, e-mails, and a bill-board. Employees who are on parental leave are informed about team meetings by notes regularly, and have full access to the company's data. Parents who return after a long-term leave are supported in feedback interviews. There are special working time arrangements for the first period after return.<sup>34</sup>

Employees have the opportunity to participate in further trainings.<sup>35</sup> This offer is independent from the amount of regular working hours of an employee.

The company supports parents with a particular donation for every child that is born.

Sylvia Reckel, Human Resource Manager and responsible for the realisation of the audit berufundfamilie, says: "We make a contribution to the development of a family-conscious and future-oriented working environment, where women as well as men are responsible for both, work and family life."<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> See URL: [http://www.windwaerts.de/fileadmin/redakteure/downloads/Audit\\_BuF\\_Windwaerts.pdf](http://www.windwaerts.de/fileadmin/redakteure/downloads/Audit_BuF_Windwaerts.pdf) (last access March 1, 2011)

<sup>30</sup> For further information see URL: <http://www.windwaerts.de/de/windwaerts/unternehmensportrait/beruf-und-familie.html> (last access March 1, 2011)

<sup>31</sup> See p. 2f, URL: [http://www.windwaerts.de/fileadmin/redakteure/downloads/Audit\\_BuF\\_Windwaerts.pdf](http://www.windwaerts.de/fileadmin/redakteure/downloads/Audit_BuF_Windwaerts.pdf) (last access March 1, 2011)

<sup>32</sup> See URL: <http://www.erfolgsfaktor-familie.de/default.asp?id=520&gbid=19> (last access March 1, 2011)

<sup>33</sup> See URL: <http://www.windwaerts.de/de/aktuelles/hintergrundinformationen/arbeit-und-familie.html> (last access March 1, 2011)

<sup>34</sup> See URL: <http://www.erfolgsfaktor-familie.de/default.asp?id=520&gbid=19> (last access March 1, 2011)

<sup>35</sup> See URL: <http://www.genderdax.de/index.php?cid=fimm&fid=19> (last access March 1, 2011)

<sup>36</sup> See *ibid.*



### **Consorzio sociale Agorà, Italy**

*Presented by Team Srl*

Agorà Social Consortium is a non-profit organisation set up in Genova in 1995. At present it involves 14 social cooperatives working in health services, welfare, educational and recreational services as well as social and work inclusion. Mainly female staff (75%) of 558 people aged 30 to 40. Women in managerial positions roughly 50%.

Agorà's mission is the development of interlinked services and initiatives such as: child care, integration of non-EU immigrants, care of the elderly (at home or remote assistance) day centres, socio-health training, career guidance and mentoring for young people. These initiatives are based on formal agreements with public and private organisations.

Starting in 2008 Agorà has been investing in development of its own staff as well as improving the policy of its 'Social Budget'. It has been awarded the UNI EN ISO 9001:2000 certification.

In line with its social responsibility framework for a number of years the Consortium has been involved in promoting projects regarding equal opportunities, career paths and gender policies. These are usually funded under the Law 53/2000 and are carried out in collaboration with private businesses and local authorities (Municipality of Genova, Province of Genova).

As for the specific item of family conciliation, Agorà runs 5 private crèches for single or groups of businesses in various urban areas. Normally these crèches are at the disposal of local residents (in 2008 there were 13 beneficiaries, that is children. Agorà also runs 5 Play Schools open in the morning for children under 3 and in the afternoon for children up to 6 accompanied by their parents. These play schools are funded under a Regional Law of 1997 offering some services to families (in 2008 beneficiaries were 60).

In 2009 Agorà launched a project for Summer Schools for school-children. The Consortium responded to a series of requirements of its own health employees, mainly non-EU women or single parents families who had nowhere to leave their children during school holidays. This implied that these people were often compelled to long periods of absence from work (illness, paid leave) which naturally slowed down the organisation's activities.

At present there are 3 centres (Summer Schools) located in different macro-areas of the city and they are free. From summer 2010 these centres will be open also to Consortium Agorà employees' children.

The welfare of Agorà's own employees is a top priority of the management. In 2008 internal reorganisation was carried out. The resulting structure is articulated in so-called

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“macro-areas of services” linked to the relative territories. As a result Agorà is now closer to its customers’ needs and is in a position to monitor and motivate its own staff thus increasing efficiency and ‘working by objectives’. Staff and social operators can usually benefit from reconciling their needs. Women on maternity leave by law are entitled to 80% of their salary and receive the remaining 20% from the Consortium’s own funds. On return from leave they can take part-time or choose a more suitable work location. These practices are willingly granted by the Consortium in a bilateral agreement between employer and employee.

Furthermore on the employee’s return to work a period of re-training and mentoring, if required, for the job is provided. Tele-work can also be arranged if compatible with job description.

Few male employees have taken advantage of paternity leave because their economic benefits are quite low (30% of the salary)

In conclusion, the Consortium workers can avail of the children’s services which are payable.

Anna Manca, Manager of the Macro-Area Innovation Services, states that “flexibility in working hours is highly important especially for managers and executives and in general for people working by objectives as work can be planned efficiently. Obviously the situation for front desk position is different as this requires constant manning”.

### **COOP LIGURIA, Italy**

*Presented by Team Srl*

Coop Liguria is a non-profit consumer cooperative business in the retail field. At present, it owns 41 retail stores (37 supermarkets and 4 hypermarkets in the north-west of Italy.

It has a staff of roughly 3000 of which 80% is female mainly involved in direct sales. In higher managerial positions the percentage of male and female is around 50%.

In 2004 the Coop launched an internal work re-organization called 6EFFE: Flexibility in favour of children and families, training, customer’s loyalty” which was funded under the Law 53/2000 art 9 (see paragraph in *National situation*). The project aims to match store employee requirements (concerning staff attendance on the job) with their family needs, particularly those with children under 8 years or those involved in looking after disabled or elderly relatives.

The plan was conceived as a model of flexible management of human resources and is based on a job organisation in “islands” which are groups of employees belonging to the same department who have the same or similar duties and manage their own work time. An “island” can be made up of from three to twenty employees and is coordinated by a person (“animator”) who collects and manages individuals’ timetable preferences. This “animator” is a key figure for the success of the “island organisation”. This role does not have to be covered by anyone in a managerial position - on the contrary, the group can chosen or anyone in the group can volunteer for it.

Each person in the “island” is free to propose his/her own preference of a “block timetable” for a period of 2 to 4 weeks during the current year. The process for finding a satisfactory agreement between the company’s and the individuals’ needs is always the same. Each person’s needs are matched with those of the other “islanders” and with the work-loads of the store in order to best meet end-user (customers) expectations of service. There follows a negotiation phase to reach agreement regarding “islanders” timetables which can satisfy corporate requirements while respecting employees’ expectations. At end of this phase all working schedules are completed and are transmitted to the GM of the store.

The hours which are above or below those contained in the contractual working week are collected in a “sock” of hours that employees can add to or subtract from as they wish.

The process of organisation of the hours of work is supported by a software programme created specifically for Coop Liguria by the Faculty of Engineering of Genoa. It s a simulator MASC NG designed to calculate workloads and planning needs of job coverage. The SW is set up on a multimedia Totem within each commercial area and is a support for the “animator” in preparing proposals based on workloads processed by the simulator against employees’ time/work needs.

In its first 2 pilot years (2004-2006) the 6EFFE project was funded by the State and involved 13 stores, 20 departments and around 250 people. From 2006 Coop Liguria funded the project directly and at present counts 22 stores, 58 departments and over 300 employees.

Satisfaction of the participants (“islanders”) is high according to the periodical checks on the climate within the company – around 90% of the people expressed positively on conciliating work with family obligations.

As stated by Mauro Bruzzone, vice. President of Coop Liguria: “both staff and customers have benefited from this new organisational model which has encouraged productivity thanks to efficient use of available resources. Employees are less likely to take time off and are highly motivated.

Apart from the 6EFFE project Coop Liguria has other initiatives regarding staff welfare: individual or small group training for employees re-entering the workplace after leave of

absence, particular attention for those who care for disabled, seriously ill or elderly relatives, extension of maternity leave for single parents (one parent families).

### **MIGNANEGO SOCIETA' COOPERATIVA, Italy**

*Presented by Team Srl*

The no-profit Cooperative Mignanego has been active for some time in the care of minors and the elderly. It is located in a hilly area surrounding of Genoa. The company has 25 female members aged 25 to 45. Women in managerial positions are 5.

Among its activities, the cooperative runs a crèche called Pollicino. It was set up in 2005 thanks to the support of the two most important businesses, the Local Public Authority and the Cooperative itself. These stakeholders took part in a preliminary needs' analysis – mainly addressed to local businesses and families' needs – The survey highlighted the opportunity for a new structure geared to pre-school children, as the existing ones could not satisfy the current need.

From its start-up, the Pollicino project was located in some existing school buildings (nursery school, primary school and intermediate school) owned by the local public authority of Mignanego County Council, The classrooms and open spaces were renovated by means of a Regione Liguria fund for businesses crèches (Law 53/2000).

The Pollicino crèche is open not only to the business partners' employees' children but also to local residents. Children aged 13 to 36 months are welcomed from Monday to Friday. According to their needs, parents can choose between two options: full-time service 7.30 a.m to 6 p.m. or part-time service 7.30 a.m to 13.30 p.m. or 11.30 a.m. to 6.p.m. For those agreeing on the second option, an emergency option is available for up to 4 times per month for full day care. Started as an occasional opportunity for parents with specific needs, this option of the incentive has become in time a standard service of the crèche. The Pollicino's mission is indeed to offer a series of flexible and differentiated services that respond to parents' and families' needs in general. With all their customers, Pollicino strives to create direct and lasting relationships. As underlined by the manager, Paola Campi, " the crèche is not at all a baby-parking service but a custom-made service where times are planned around parents' careers so as to balance careers and family times".

With a view of solving parents' problems, the cooperative offers a service of babysitting for children from 12 months on called "S.O.S. NANNY". It is a sort of first-aid for families that have problems in bringing children to the crèche in an emergency (for example: sickness, bad weather). The service is implemented by the cooperative following a parent's phone call for help. At present a group of four educators are available to look after children in their own home while their parents are at work. In view of setting up a comfortable trusting relationship with the babysitter, child and family, the cooperative organises some preliminary meetings between them and to try

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to match the right nanny with the right child. S.O.S. NANNY is open not only during the crèche hours but also in evenings and/or week-ends if the families and educators are mutually satisfied with each other. At this stage the initiative can be taken personally.

Another service of Pollicino is directed to those children who after their crèche stay, attend the nursery school, open only from 8.30 a.m to 16.30 p.m. but parents can leave their children at the crèche outside the nursery school opening and closing times.

Furthermore, a number of educational events and laboratories are offered by the Co-op on Saturdays so as to offer families further opportunity of free-time together. Parents are encouraged to take part in these initiatives but if impossible there are educators to look after their children for some hours.

### **JSC “Valmieras stikla šķiedra – VSŠ” (Valmiera glass fibre), Latvia**

*Presented by Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia*

JSC “VSŠ” is chemical and textile industry company in city Valmiera since year 1963. Company manufactures glass fibre and glass fibre products, which can be used for further processing, for thermal and technical insulation materials, and as ready-made building materials. “VSŠ” is one of the largest enterprises of the chemical and textile industries within the Baltic States with 738 workers ( female 350 or 47.3%; male 388 or 52.7%). Company is led by board and totally managing personnel consist of 13 persons (female 4 or 38.8%; male 9 or 69.2%).

The aim of the personnel department is to provide enterprise with professional and motivated employees that would be motivated realize strategy of company and their personal aims. To support professionalism of the employees, company organize regular trainings. Educational system has been created in the “VSŠ” that provide training for new workers, training for new occupation and improvement of professional skills within framework of all professions that are necessary for manufacturing. As well as those with great experience in the company shares with young colleagues.

Great success for employees and employer is collective agreement that was established even before company was officially registered (year 1962). Collective agreement provides social guarantees more than settled in the Labour Law. Those who are trade union members receive additional social guarantees and support in different situations at the work and their lives. Collective agreement support all employees even if some of them are not members of trade union organization. Due to good corporation of both employer and reps of trade union in the company, collective agreement include many issues regarding work and family life balance. Year by year these conditions improves when employer consider that productivity of workers grow as well as their immutability and satisfaction in the company whereof obtainers are both sides. Collective agreement is like a guarantee of employers’ promises to employees as well

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as employees guarantees to employer so providing social peace in the company from both sides. But there are still unwritten family-friendly conditions that employees can count on working in "VSŠ" that would be described later on.

Within the framework of Collective agreement employer of "VSŠ" implements family-friendly measures in such areas:

- Employer allocate additional leave 3 days per year for woman who have 3 or more children at the age not more than 16 years old or disabled child. This condition is directly taking into consideration that in Latvia tendencies to increase number of lonely mothers but no official statistical data about that;
- Employer allocate leave for studies and examinations for those employees that are successful studying in all kind educational institutions: 1 day per week during educational period for adoption of educational program; 20 calendar days during period of educational year or public examinations or by agreeing of both sides if studying by initiative of employer;
- If necessary, employer provide conditions for organizing industrial training with theoretical and practical training inside the company and afterwards gives job accordance his/her specialty and qualification;
- In the case of trainings for a new occupation and/or improvement of professional qualification, employer keeps employee average monthly wage not more than 3 months;
- For those employees who children start go to the 1<sup>st</sup> class employer allocate amount of 1 minimum wage (LVL 180 or €256);
- Christmas Eve has been organized especially for employees children who age is under 7 year.
- Employer allocate allowance amount of 2 minimum wages (LVL 360 or €512) regarding wedding if employee establish family 1<sup>st</sup> time as well as regarding child's birth.

Unwritten conditions that have been implemented in company to improve family-friendly conditions are: company' basketball, football and volleyball teams where family members can be supporters; winter fishing competition with families of employees. Sport games in summer time that is organized every year and become a great family sport and holiday event.

To fulfill all conditions mentioned in collective agreement and company's culture life to provide employees work and family life balance, board of the "VSŠ" compose yearly budget foreseeing concrete amount for conditions mentioned above.

### **Member of a Linde group "AGA Ltd.", Latvia**

*Presented by Free Trade Union Confederation of Latvia*

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AGA Ltd. is a leading industrial and medical gas company established in 1994 in Latvia also dealing with food gas, trade of gases and welding equipment, medical equipment; cylinder rent and deliveries. Solutions what improve quality of life and make production more cost – effective. With operations in Scandinavia and the Baltic region, AGA is currently northern Europe’s leading industrial gas company and part of [The Linde Group](#). In the Region Europe North AGA is also market leader in liquefied petroleum gas, ie. propane sold in cylinders. AGA has also ventures in biogas which it distributes. There are 54 employees working in AGA company in Latvia but as an international organization Linde Group benefit from the experience and viewpoints of different more than 70 countries and unit 47 731 employees.

That is why it is so important to stress work and family life balance even in numerically small company as AGA in Latvia that is always looking for motivated, entrepreneurial-minded people with an international mindset. Coupled with company’s training and development programs, employees of AGA are able to continuously improve their capabilities and reach their full potential, along attractive and rewarding career paths.

Conditions that improves work and family life balance in the company are mentioned in the collective agreement and initiated by both sides – reps of employees (trade union) and employer. Employer mentioned three main things that are really important to him implementing family-friendly measures at workplace: small amount of labour turnover, employees are motivated to achieve good results at the work and decrease of expenses related with training of new workers.

Within the framework of Collective agreement employer of “AGA” implements family-friendly measures in such areas:

- Employer allocate single allowance LVL 150 or € 213 for employee reaches pension age if he worked in company not less then 5 years;
- Employees who children start study in 1<sup>st</sup> class in the school, employer allocate LVL 150 or € 213 for each child. If both of the parents are working in the company, allowance is allocated to one of them (mother);
- Employees who children study class 2<sup>nd</sup> till 12<sup>th</sup> in the school, employer allocate material aid the amount of LVL 50 or € 71 for each childe. If both of the parents are working in the company, material aid receives one of them;
- Employer allocate allowance amount of LVL 150 or € 213 regarding child birth;
- For retired employee employer allocate single allowance or special present in the Christmas time;
- Employer allocate 1 paid work day to mother or father to lead his/her child to 1<sup>st</sup> class at the school;
- Regarding changes on work conditions employer undertake to train and train for new occupation where appropriate;

- Those employees that have been dismissed because of cut of the stuff and they have to wait for their old-age pension 2 years or less, employer allocate 50% of minimum wage for each month till his/her reaches old-age pension.

Employees of the AGA company can plan their working day and feel flexible to family reasons if there are children that should be taken out earlier from the kindergarten or planning their vacation time with family.

It is important that company resort to benefaction. Employees by their own with family members planned and decorated center for abused children in Christmas time last year and company gave oxygen concentrator for Palliative Child Care service Center. Benefaction is now as a tradition in company and employee with employer come together to plan their activities year by year.

### **JSC "JAROS SAUGA", Lithuania**

*Presented by Social innovation Fund*

Established in 1998, joint-stock Company „Jaros sauga“ provides security service ensuring armed security for persons and assets. The number of objects under protection of the company in 12 years has reached 750. Currently the company operates in smaller regions of Lithuania - Anyksciai, Kupiskis, Rokiskis, Vilnius, Moletai and Panevezys.

In 2008 JSC „Jaros sauga“ employed 120 employees, 60% of which were women to work as security guards in the network of supermarkets. At the moment due to the economic crisis in the country „JSC „Jaros sauga“ employs 50 employees from which 22 are women working in administration (9 women) and in security (13 women).

Since 2008 organization started a non-traditional for Lithuania way of employing women to work as security personnel to work in supermarkets. In this way the company is breaking the stereotypes that only men can work in security field. The management of the company already realized that women perform their job in a more professional, accurate and responsible way and they are more diplomatic, have better reaction. Management of the company considers its employees as an asset and the change in staff is not being practiced. Nevertheless, company faced the need to reconcile work and family life and to offer its employees more flexible forms of work. In order to assist its employees the management of JSC “Jaros sauga” offered them the following possibilities:

- Flexible working hours. The method of work in teams on shift basis gives female employees opportunities to solve the problems that occur in their private/family life as their absence at work is substituted by the colleagues. Usually the security guards work 12 hours and have 3 days free afterwards.



- Company encourages its employees to improve their skills and competences by creating possibilities to study. At the same time all women working in security go to the fitness centre, they are also given courses on self-defense and taught how to use the gun.

JSC "Jaros sauga" tries to develop the dialogue with its employees and recently started to implement principles of equal opportunities at workplaces, thus fostering healthy work atmosphere and family-friendly working conditions. Director of the company has participated in the project [„Implementation of equal employment opportunities for men and women: measures, practice, changes“](#), financed by Republic of Lithuania & ESF, 2006-2008. Participation in the trainings focused on need for equality planning within institutions and enterprises and especially the study visit to several organizations in Finland, where equality planning is foreseen by national law, gave the director of JSC "Jaros sauga" new innovative ideas to be implemented within his company. He tried to introduce the equality principles at workplaces by equality planning drafting the equality plans and appointing the working group to monitor the progress of equality plan's implementation.

JSC "Jaros sauga" is one of the nice examples showing that not only big companies take into consideration the wellbeing of employees at their workplaces, but also small and medium size enterprises make steps in creating equality atmosphere and assisting their employees to reconcile work and family life.

### **JSC "OMNITEL", Lithuania**

*Presented by Social innovation Fund*

Omnitel is the largest telecommunication company in the Baltic States, member of [TeliaSonera](#) group. It provides a broad range of services of carrying and packaging of voice, images, data, information, transactions and entertainment. Omnitel has 2 million subscribers and almost 40 % of the mobile revenue market in [Lithuania](#).

In March 2009 at the National Awards for Socially Responsible Business, which was held in the Lithuanian Academy of Science, Omnitel in Lithuania was recognized as a Socially Responsible Company 2008 and Workplace of the Year 2008. At the event awards were received only by the most advanced companies, which had made the largest contribution to creating social welfare and reducing negative impact to environment. Moreover, such kind of awards was the first and unique initiative among the ones supported by the state institutions, aiming at encouraging companies to implement principles of social responsibility in their everyday activities. In 2008 according to the survey performed by the newspaper "Business News" and by the carrier website [www.cv.lt](http://www.cv.lt). JSC Omnitel was ranked as the fifth among the "Most desirable Employers". JSC Omnitel achieved these results only by developing the dialogue with its employees, carrying out the annual employees' satisfaction survey,

implementing principles of equal opportunities at workplaces, fostering healthy work atmosphere and family friendly working conditions.

In 2008 JSC "Omnitel" employed 736 employees. Most of them are young people up to 34 years old, who have a need of reconciliation of work and their private life (studies, family life). In order to assist them in this need the enterprise is offering favorable work conditions and flexible working hours. High focus set on the needs of the employees' results in the family-friendly workplace establishment.

All employees working at JSC Omnitel take part in family events organized by the company. They are encouraged as well to make use of measures in reconciling work and family life provided by Law.

The law states that in accordance with the Labour Code of Lithuanian Republic the employees raising a child with disabilities up to 16 or 2 children under 12 shall be granted an additional day of rest per month (or their weekly working time shall be shortened by 2 hours). The employees who are raising 3 or more children under 12 shall be entitled to 2 additional days of rest per month (or their weekly working time shall be shortened by four hours) and shall be paid the average wage. The rest days can be taken by both mothers and fathers. *Art. 214. of the Labour Code. Additional privileges for persons raising children.*

On the basis of the above mentioned Law, JSC Omnitel offers the following possibilities to their employees with need to reconcile work and private/family life:

**Parental leave.** In 2008 21 employees exercised their right to take one month parental leave. This made around 95% of all employees, who got a baby during the year.

**Additional free days.** Employees are actively practicing the possibility provided to them by the law to take monthly additional free days intended for childcare for those parents, who have 2 and more children up to 12 years old.

**Flexible time.** Employees are given the possibility depending on their work character to work at home or use flexible timetable.

**Other measures initiated by JSC Omnitel itself:**

- 43 employees who had got a baby during the year received the present from the company – 1500 Lt/child (~434 EUR);
- Around 80% of all employees took part in annual events, organized by the company – Christmas celebration, summer picnic, Christmas party for the children of the employees;
- In 2009 together with its social partners JSC Omnitel initiated implementation of the project "Creating family-friendly workplace and promotion of quality employment by the social partnership", thus contributing to the family-friendly attitude formation within society. The project is financed by the funds of European Union. During the project, the workshops with the focus on the measures encouraging reconciliation of work and family life will be organized for the all levels of management and employees. Such professionals as psychologists

and the family law specialists will provide consultations on this issue for all employees in all regions. Families of employees with lower income will be offered the personal training sessions. All relevant information about the project is placed on the intranet of the company. The webpage also includes the section consisting of information on family-friendly measures, advice from the specialists and forum providing the possibility for everyone to discuss the important issues and get a personal advice from the specialist.

### **"PAS AGOTA", Lithuania**

*Presented by European Partnership*

Birutes Gardauskienes enterprise "Pas Agota" is functioning since 1993. It owns 2 shops situated in the centre of small Lithuanian town Jurbarkas offering for sale clothes, cosmetics, toys, shoes and other goods. The sales persons working in the shops are only women, while administration employs 2 women and one man. All employees are encouraged to improve their professional skills and competences by participating in special courses organized by the owner of the company.

Even if the atmosphere at workplace has been always friendly and motivating, there have occurred problems in reconciliation of maternity and work. The main problem faced by female employees was the fact that early childhood education institutions close at 17.00 and are closed on weekends. At the same time, the shops are closing at 18.00 every day and are opened till noon on Saturdays as well. Female employees working in the shops of "Pas Agota" and having preteen children faced a big problem in taking decision where to leave their children while they have to work.

As a response to the needs of employees, in 2008 the owner of the enterprise Birute Gardauskiene established a child room within the premises of the enterprise. Equipped with basic furniture, toys and books this child room was a very good solution for the female employees, allowing them to care for their children till the end of work after the working hours of childcare institutions.

This nice initiative shown by the owner of the enterprise is good example that even in small towns there are organisations which care about the needs of their employees and try to find the best solutions for them helping to reconcile work and family life and thus ensuring that they remain active on the labour market.

### **JSC "FESTO", Lithuania**

*Presented by European Partnership*

Joint-stock company "Festo" is a worldwide leading supplier of pneumatic and electrical automation technology. It is a globally aligned, independent family enterprise with headquarters in Esslingen, Germany and a leader within its respective industry over a period of 50 years. JSC Festo Lithuania has been established in Kaunas, Lithuania in 1992 as official representative for products and services of Festo Group. At the moment Festo Lithuania employs 57 employees: 26 women and 31 men. In total from all employees there are 18 children under 18 years old. The Head of Department – Director is a male, deputy Director – male and manager positions are taken by 3 women.

The company offers its employees possibilities of industrial training and vocational education. Recognizing the fact that without motivated, qualified, flexible employees, any logistics concept is bound to be a failure Festo took a solution to establish a learning organisation, while consistently investing around 1.5% of its sales in education and further training.

The principle of employee availability, controlled by the sales order situation, is implemented through flexible working time models (part time work is possible with any position) and remuneration systems.

Festo Lithuania follows the common Festo human resources policy - motivating and promoting its employees, giving them possibility to reconcile work and family life:

***Paternity leave.*** Company is encouraging its male employees to take additional days of rest guaranteed by Labour Code of Lithuania and/or paternity leave. Till now paternity leaves were taken by 5 male employees. As company employs a large number of men, it is quite common for men to practice paternity leave and all employees and employer tolerates this very well.

***Additional free days.*** 3 male employees are enjoying their right to take additional days of rest per month.

***Flexible working hours.*** Company seeks to assist its employees to get balance between work and family life by offering them possibility to have flexible working hours.

***Possibility to work at home.*** Company is offering employees possibility to work at home depending on their work character. 1 male employee having 2 under aged children was offered the possibility to work at home (in Klaipeda) via created distant workplace.

***Other initiatives.*** JSC Festo is very much concerned about loyalty of employees and keeps old traditions of organizing different events for employees and their family members, such as children Christmas party, New Year party, picnic in summer time, etc., so that all employees feel as part of the JSC "Festo" family.

In accordance with the Labour Code of Lithuanian Republic the employees raising a child with disabilities up to 16 or 2 children under 12 shall be granted an additional day of rest per month (or their weekly working time shall be shortened by 2 hours). The employees who are raising 3 or more children under 12

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shall be entitled to 2 additional days of rest per month (or their weekly working time shall be shortened by four hours) and shall be paid the average wage. The rest days can be taken by both mothers and fathers. *Art. 214. of the Labour Code. Additional privileges for persons raising children.*

Since 2006 July 1st Labour Code entitles men employees to take parental leave till a child will reach 1 month of age. Parental leave is paid directly by the State Social Insurance Fund. Art. 179. of the Labour code.

### **"Rimi Lietuva", Lithuania**

*Presented by Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson*

Rimi Baltic is one of the leading retailers in Baltic States and is a private for profit company operating three chains appreciated by customers: Rimi Hypermarket", "Rimi" and "Supernetto that are located in all the country.

The company Rimi Baltic was established as a joint venture between ICA and Kesko Livs in January 2005. With changing economic climate and the Baltic region gradually becoming a single market, the Swedish company "ICA AB" and the leading Finnish trade company "Kesko food" took a decision to establish a joint venture and a retail chain operating in all three Baltic countries. Starting from 2006 Rimi Baltic is subsidiary company of ICA AB. Rimi Baltic is represented by three companies In Baltic States – Rimi Eesti Food, Rimi Latvia and Rimi Lietuva. Rimi Lietuva currently operates 26 Rimi supermarkets, 14 Rimi hypermarkets. Rimi Lietuva employs 3320 people. 79,93% of employees are women and 9,55 – men. In managment positions Rimi has 9.33% (250) of women and 1.19% (32) of men. Numbers are unusual and gender proportion is not stereotypical.

Company operates in Lithuania since 1995 and the first "Rimi" shopping centre was opened in year 2000. "Rimi Lietuva" is working to ensure optimal combination of price and quality, attentive service, comfortable and convenient shopping. The company implements various social responsibility initiatives, supports large families and promotes other special projects. Through commitment company brings together individuals from different backgrounds, cultures, and thinking styles providing remarkably different talents, perspectives, life and career experiences.

As most of the big international companies "Rimi" states that in this time of two-income households, flexible work hours make sense for responsible employees. Flexible work hours breed trust on the part of both employee and employer, and a sense of gratitude on the part of the employee. Company implies an opportunities for its employees to reconcile their personal/family life with their everyday work.

Employees have an opportunity their children looked after at the workplace. The child-care centre may is owned by the company and managed by a board of directors that includes representatives of the company and parents whose children go to the centre. It is sometimes also open to children in the community. It also complies with provincial

and municipal regulations. Work-related child care centre of Rimi accept preschoolers and infants. This measure helps lessen the stress experienced by employees. Parents may have easier access to a child care service. Moreover, a work-related child care centre accommodates the company employees' schedules more readily as well as perceives as an important employee benefit and is very conducive to the recruitment of new employees. The human resources manager of Rimi declares that for a company, the costs of such a measure may be high, because employer generally contribute by paying an amount that covers the rent and other costs. But unconsiderably, this measure of conciling work and family is the most modern in Lithuania.

By tackling work-family reconciliation challenge, Rimi address its employees needs, especially women's, measures may attract more women and part-time workers as new members and enhance their image and appeal among young workers for whom a successful work-life balance increasingly matters.

### **"Office system", Lithuania**

*Presented by Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson*

UAB "Office system" has been established in Vilnius, Lithuania in 2004. At the moment "Office system" employs 25 employees: 9 women and 16 men. The Head of Department – Director is a male, deputy Director – male and manager positions are taken by 4 women.

The company is one of the most improved companies in Vilnius. Main trade is office supply and office equipment. Also it sells computers, supply printing and stamps service and all kinds of stationary. In stationary business market it works already for 5 years. At this moment it takes 5th position from 25 competitors in Lithuania office supply market. Company imports all kind of production, near 5000 products and it is strong in e-shop market. E-shop [www.officesystem.lt](http://www.officesystem.lt) is one of the most improved and having highest number of visitors' e-shops in Lithuania. Every day delivers more than 60 orders in Vilnius and other cities of Lithuania.

Company supplies production for biggest banks, telecommunication companies, many of government institutions of Lithuania. Trying to be social responsible company, motivating and promoting its employees, encouraging them to reconcile work and family "Office system" provides following reconciliation policies:

***Flexible working hours*** - workers spend all or part of their week working from home or somewhere else away from the employer's premises. Moreover some of them regarding contract have the freedom to work in any way they choose outside a set core of hours determined by the head of company. Essentially, it allows employees, on an individual or collective basis, to determine the start and end times of their working day. In this way company reaches greater cost-effectiveness and efficiency, such as

savings on overheads when employees work from home. The main benefit of working flexibly for employees is that it gives them the chance to fit other commitments and activities around work and make better use of their free time. Head of the company certifies that flextime is an arrangement whereby employees have some discretion that allow them to plan their workday around their personal lives. They can manage their work hours more efficiently by introducing, in agreement with the manager, a work schedule that is in the best interest of both the employee and the organization.

Furthermore this practice in "Office system" has been credited with reductions in tardiness and absenteeism, increases in employee morale and deemed an incentive for recruitment. This practice is so efficient in the time of crisis when all costs have to be saved by employer and employee as well. Flexible working is helpful for employees who have young or even disabled children or who care for an adult. However, while such employees have the statutory right to request flexible working, those who work in the company without the right may find flexible working helpful too. For example: as mentioned above working from home may allow them to feel more in control of their workload staggered working hours helps them avoid the stress of commuting at peak times. Employer has a really outstanding experience how the employees are motivated and more efficient for the daily activities. Higher job satisfaction, better staff morale and reduced absence of employees are the main positive indicators of social policies implementation. Moreover, such measure creates greater continuity as staff, who might otherwise have left, are offered hours they can manage.

„Office system“managers find that a better work-life balance has a positive impact on staff retention, and on employee relations, motivation and commitment. The main advantage is that high rates of retention means that you keep experienced staff who can often offer a better overall service.

### **Individual Restaurant Company, UK**

*Presented by Merseyside Expanding Horizons Ltd*

IRC is an independent company, a small to medium sized business operating 33 Restaurants on sites across the UK, targeting the casual to premium dining out market.

It currently employs approximately 2000 staff. The company has a strong ethos of encouraging development and promotion from within, and offers the staff the opportunity to acquire new skills through the provision of personal development and training packages.

Due to the nature of the catering industry the demand for working evenings, long shifts and weekends is high. Over the past 4 years as the company has grown it has seen an increase in the number of female employees working both in kitchens and front of house who have young families. The company identified this and felt the need to try

and accommodate the working patterns for these employees as much as possible, to enable them to have a good work life balance.

When an employee is ready to return to work following maternity leave they are sent a 'flexible working application form' asking them to detail any adjustments they may wish to make to their previous working pattern. A meeting is then arranged with the employee, line manager and a representative from the HR department to agree a return to work package that accommodates the employees changed family circumstances.

It is not always possible to fully accommodate all the requests, but as far as is possible taking into account the impact on the rest of their staff team the company has always managed to achieve an agreement with the employee which enhances their work life balance and allows for more flexible family friendly work patterns.

Female employees at all levels across the company have benefited from this initiative, including chefs, restaurant administrators, kitchen porters, an events manager and HQ staff.. Arrangements can include changes of working hours and shift patterns to accommodate childcare arrangements or a planned reduction in hours to enable more shared family time at week-ends and evenings.

### **Happy Computers Ltd, UK**

*Presented by Merseyside Expanding Horizons Ltd*

Happy Computer is a small independent IT Training company that operates across the UK from its base in London. It employs a workforce of approximately 50 people, 55% of whom are women and 15% from an ethnic minority background.

For the past 10 years Happy have been advocates for the development of improved work-life balance in the workplace and were the first company in London to be awarded the Investors in People Work-Life Balance Model. Most recently in 2009 they were winners of the Health and Wellbeing Award presented by the 'Great Place to Work Institute'.

"Happy Ltd exemplifies what it is to be a great place to work. The award recognises the company's action in regard to employee health and wellbeing. Happy Ltd strive to achieve this in all of their workplace actions." William Johnson, Great Place to Work

The key to the company's success in achieving such low staff turnover, only 10% compared with an industry average of 17%, is the twice yearly personal appraisals that keep a close check on their employment policies and ensures that all staff are satisfied with their personalised working arrangements. One initiative enables staff to balance family commitments by working either in the evenings or on Saturdays, and then taking time off work during the week.



Happy Ltd Managing Director states “we believe that by offering flexible working arrangements to all staff, we are appreciating and recognising the best assets of the business; our people.”

### **Lloyds TSB Bank plc, UK**

*Presented by Merseyside Expanding Horizons Ltd*

A leading UK based financial services organisation employing approximately 63,000 people in numerous sites across the UK. Approximately 2,000 women a year take maternity leave and the return to work rate is 86%. Women make up just under a quarter of the senior managers and just over 40% in general management. There is a high level of flexible working across the workforce; more women work part-time, but across other flexible working arrangements there is little difference in the gender balance.

In 2009 Lloyds was recognised in the Top Employers for Working Families Awards.

LTSB stated ‘ we have broken ground in developing an outstanding package of work-life balance initiatives which make the company a great family friendly place to work, regardless of gender, grade or circumstance’

They include ‘Work Option’, a company-wide flexible working scheme, where all employees can apply to change their work patterns. It encourages innovative working practices on an individual and team basis to achieve a better work-life balance for all staff. It includes part-time, job-sharing, tele-working, compressed, reduced or variable hours and school term-time working.

There is an on-line Job-share register; generous maternity and adoption packages, topping up statutory pay during the first 26 weeks and offering 63 weeks maternity or adoption leave. Two weeks fully paid paternity leave and up to 52 weeks partners leave [including same sex partners] when they are the main carer plus 13 weeks leave for parents and carers. In addition paid compassionate and emergency leave are available for situations affecting family or dependants, with a extra weeks paid leave for any major life events. A Career Break scheme operates which can be particularly useful to support the longer term care of children or dependants.

There is also a family-focused flexible benefits scheme which includes the availability of Childcare vouchers, medical cover which can be extended to include a partner or children, and a Holiday trading scheme which employees to buy or sell up to 5 days leave per annum.

Support packs are available to staff and managers to guide people, case studies are featured on the company website portraying real-life flexible working scenarios and links to other websites offering advice to fathers and guidance on birth, babies and childcare are promoted in branches and head office.

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“With the introduction of ‘Work Options’ we moved away from the assumption that work-life balance was only an issue for women and children. Flexibility became an option for all staff and now managers had a toolkit to support them in working with employees to make decisions about the appropriate work-life balance for their family.”  
Fiona Cameron, Equality and Diversity Director, LTSB.

### Kodinavux, Finland

*Presented by Finnish Institute of Occupational Health*

#### *General information about the practice*

- The practice relates to additional services provided by the employer in a situation when an employee’s child gets ill. The employer offers baby-sitting by a specialized child-care provider and the employee goes to work or works from home using computer or other IT communications technology. Finland has strict rules that children cannot be taken into municipal or other childcare if they are caught with flu or a related infection.
- One child-care provider is Kodinavux ([www.kodinavux.fi](http://www.kodinavux.fi)), which is a leading company in this field. It has established several contracts with private businesses, which offer baby-sitting as a bonus for their employees in circumstances such as the sudden illness of a child. Kodinavux employs skilled child-care professionals whose background and qualifications are carefully checked and registered. The child-care services can be ordered by telephone or by internet, on Sunday evenings there is an emergency line for arrangements needed on Monday.

#### *Temporary child-care leave when a child fall suddenly ill*

- In Finland, either of the parents has the right to stay at home for up till four days to look after a sick child under 10 years during a sudden illness (*temporary child care leave*). The law does not secure their pay during these days, but a number of collective agreements between employees’ and employers’ organizations have done so. In public sector institutions and hospitals, there is an agreement on full pay for three consecutive days.
- According to research, the sudden illness of a child and the consequent temporary absence of the employee/parent, are named by personnel managers as more difficult to arrange than the longer-term family leaves. HR-mangers do not see major problems connected with leave taking which is predictable; problems arise with unpredictable absences particularly of the key-personnel. This concerns small and middle-sized companies where it is more difficult than in larger companies to find a substitute and reorganize work during a temporary child care leave.
- Even though both parents have the right to stay at home with the sick child, it is mostly the mother who does so. The statistics show that the average number of absences per year is about 10 days.

### *Good practice description*

- Kodinavux provides child-care services for the employees/parents in circumstances such as the sudden illness of a child. The services are free for the employee and tax-deductible expense for the employer. According to the Finnish tax deduction system, the employer pays for the service, and can afterwards deduct 60 % of the tax on the services. This system was initiated in the beginning of 2000s, and since then it has become more and more popular among both private customers and business organizations.
- Kodinavux is a good example; they have established contracts with more than 400 business organizations which offer child-care for their employees. Among their businesses contractors are well-known law and architect firms as well as companies representing IT technology. All these firms employ young and well-educated people, both women and men, who are interested in balancing their work and family life demands. For these firms, family-friendly policies are one of their business strategies to compete about skilled and motivated people. The child care bonus is one of their offers in this regard.

### *Is the good practice still in use or was it onetime social experiment?*

- The good practice is still in use in several private companies in Finland. It is, however, restricted to a relatively small number of companies. A study researching family leave policies in Finland (2005) showed that only four percent of men and three percent of women said that their workplace offered a possibility for having child care help as a bonus.
- One of the problems is that the public sector has not been able to adopt the good practice. Some reasons relate to the fact it is hard to manage and it is costly. Particularly in the present economic situation all extra costs are cut down. If the employee stays at home with a sick child, no substitutes are hired and no child-care help is offered. It is mostly the colleagues who do the remaining work.
- It is important to remember that the good practice as described here cannot be used as a pressure by the employer. The law on temporary child leave permits either of the parents to stay at home for four days to look after a sick child under 10 years. The research also shows that even though the employer would be interested in offering this service, all parents are not interested in taking part in it; they rather stay at home with the sick child.

### **III. Quality standards for training modules and competency profile of consultant on work-life balance**

Quality standards for training modules on work-life balance are based on the overview of policy measures and analysis of good practice cases in different national contexts, which are presented in the previous chapters. The quality standards for training modules on work-life balance require certain competency profile of family consultant at workplace (skills, competencies, knowledge, abilities, etc.), which are defined in more detail below.

#### ***Quality standards for training modules on work-life balance***

The following core standards have to be addressed in the training module:

1. The training module should overview the benefits of family friendly organisational policies and practices for employees, employer, organisation and national welfare.
2. The European legislations, policy measures and challenges towards the implementation of family friendly policies and practices at workplaces should be introduced.
3. The general information about national reconciliation policies, national institutional framework and policy measures/action plans taking into consideration the dimension of gender equality should be presented and analysed.
4. The training module should provide definitions of the concepts of gender mainstreaming, work-life balance, flexible work arrangements, family-friendly organization, etc.
5. The training module should provide learners with statistical data, facts, figures, indicators and results of different studies concerning work-life balance, unequal share of paid and unpaid work between genders and the impact of gender inequality on national welfare.
6. The training module should deepen knowledge of employees and employers about the work-life tensions that face individuals and families in contemporary societies, unequal distribution of paid and unpaid work between genders and changing organisational cultures.
7. The training module needs to discuss the concepts of work-life balance and family friendly organizations in a multi-dimensional approach with the aim to highlight the complex interactions among the state, market and civil society (including family).

8. Learning materials and case studies should help to recognize how social organizations of work and family life are influenced by gender stereotypes and prejudices and what are the benefits of family friendly approach and practices at work.
9. Training module should provide adequate resources for the consultant/learner to carry out consultancy on work-life balance at work and negotiation skills ensuring that organizational policies and concrete measures are initiated and produced in co-operation with all relevant staff members.
10. Tools for assessment of how friendly the organization is to employees' individual or family needs should be provided to help to identify the main areas inside the organization where the improvements are needed.
11. The training module should introduce and analyse the different good practices on work-life balance, such as flexible working time and place, part time work, different leaves' options, promotion of paternity leave, child or elderly care facilities offered by enterprises, training/retraining of individuals/family members who return to work after the break due to family reasons, etc.
12. The practical exercises, cases, discussions and interactive questions should be used to develop learners' knowledge and skills in the area of work-life balance and to confront challenges at workplaces related with gender inequality.

### ***The competency profile of family consultant***

The family consultant's main function within his/her working environment (both state and private and also third sector organizations) is to assist both the management and the employees in taking informed actions/measures related with implementation of family friendly policies and measures at workplaces.

The competency profile of family consultant defines basic knowledge, skills and competences, which are needed in order to fulfil the duty effectively.

The following standards have to be considered:

1. The family consultant should have sufficient knowledge about the European and national legislation and policy measures related to the implementation of family friendly practices at workplaces.
2. The family consultant should be familiar with the facts, figures, indicators and studies concerning the work-life balance, unequal share of paid and

- unpaid work between genders and the impact of gender inequality on national welfare.
3. The family consultant should be able to identify problems related to work-life tensions that face individuals and families in contemporary societies, unequal distribution of paid and unpaid work between genders and changing organisational cultures.
  4. The family consultant should be able to analyze work-life balance from a multi-dimensional approach and be able to reflect on the complex interrelations among the state, market and civil society (including family).
  5. The family consultant should manage to identify the most common gender inequality problems faced at reconciliation of work and life.
  6. The family consultant should be able to define the major challenges with respect to the situation of men and women in the organization and to recognize how social organizations of work and family life are influenced by gender stereotypes and prejudices.
  7. The family consultant should be aware about the different good practices on work-life balance which have been applied nationally and internationally (care services offered by organisations, different leaves' schemes, flexible work arrangements, training/retraining of employees, etc.).
  8. The family consultant should be aware of the benefits of family friendly approach and practices at work for employees, employer, organisation and national welfare.
  9. The family consultant should be aware of the indicators and methodology of monitoring the implementation of family friendly measures in organisations and be able to run the monitoring process.
  10. The family consultant should be capable to assist management in developing family friendly policies and measures in organisations.
  11. The family consultant should be capable to create networking to ensure cooperation and active participation of all workers in developing, implementing and monitoring family friendly policies and measures in organisations.
  12. The family consultant should be able to establish and expand contacts and networks with other companies, organizations and professional associations in order to exchange the experiences and good practices.
  13. The family consultant should be able to encourage employees themselves in promoting family friendly measures at workplaces.

#### **IV. Recommendation for the content of training materials for learners “Family learning on work-life balance”**

The problem of work-life balance is still faced by many families and often results in withdrawal of one of family members, usually women, from the labour market.

That’s why it is important to encourage involvement of employees themselves in implementing family-friendly initiatives within their workplaces. Thus training program for employees could increase their capacity to promote implementation of family initiatives on workplaces and as a result, to remain active in labour market.

The analysis of the national reports as well developed standards for training materials have created a basis to provide recommendations for the general content for training materials for learners “Family learning on work-life balance”

The partnership has made conclusion that the training material has to be develop on the module basis and include the following 8 modules.

1. Raise awareness of national policies and procedures including company practices for family-friendly workplaces (gender equality issues and employees’ rights)
2. Describe pre-natal and post-natal arrangements for protecting and supporting women in the workplace (e.g. breast-feeding facilities)
3. Describe the possibilities for flexible working time arrangements (incl. flexible working hours, part time work, job-sharing, work from home and telecommuting)
4. Describe formal and informal arrangements in cases of family emergencies, maternity/paternity leave, career breaks, illness or care for elderly family member
5. Describe the support services for childcare (including workplace nurseries, subsidies for childcare, employers-supported agencies in provision of additional childcare facilities, etc.)
6. Describe the possibilities for dealing with responsibilities to care for long-term disabled and elderly people and other dependents
7. Make available information about opportunities for education, training and career development when experiencing problems in work-life balance
8. Make available information about additional opportunities for services provided by companies for employees and their families (based on collective or other type of agreements, e.g. paternity/maternity/child care breaks, return-to-work policies)

Concerning the methodology, the partnership has suggested that the training material has to be developed on the module basis, then each module is developed as the separate training material and provides the possibility to organise one day face to face training on selected topic/module. It is suggested that the training course for each module will have duration of four-six hours. To ensure successful implementation of the trainings, it is suggested that each module should follow a 3-step model (Taylor Cox): sensitizing-acquiring and deepening knowledge-changing behaviour, and include the theoretical part, practical exercises and self-evaluation part.

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**Annex 1****Structure of the country report****I. National situation (2-3 pages)**

*Please describe the legal situation/policies/national programs, which are in place in your country for the following main areas:*

- 1) **Paternity/maternity/child care leaves** (national legal regulation of leaves, distribution of leaves between women and men);
- 2) **Institutional child care services, care services for elderly or family members with disabilities** (national legal regulation, availability and use of services);
- 3) **Flexible work** (e.g. part time work, work at home, flexible work organization, etc). How flexible work is defined in national legal regulation? What are the responsibilities of employers? Prevalence of different types of flexible work in your country.
- 4) **Training/retraining of employees, who return to labour market after a break due to family reasons.** Availability of services, service providers.

**II. Good practices on effective implementation of family-friendly measures at workplaces.**

*Please identify 2-3 good practices at the level of organisation/enterprise in the areas mentioned in part I: regulation of leaves, provision of care services, flexible organization of work, provision of training/retraining for employees, who return to labour market after a break or add some other areas in which you want to present the good practice.*

**A. Format for developing of the good practice.**

*Please, describe each practice separately (up to 1-1,5 page for each practice) according to the following structure:*

**2.1. General information about the company**

- country of good practice
- name of the organization/company
- type of organization: public, private for profit or private for non profit

- gender breakdown in company (in figures of number of employees men and women; and in percentage)
- gender breakdown in management (in figures of number of managers men and women; and in percentage)
- short description about companies activity (up to 5 lines)

## 2.2 General information about the good practice on work-life balance

- type of good practice in accordance with following typology
  - care for pregnant women
  - paternity/maternity/child care support leaves by company;
  - child care services
  - care services for elderly or family members with disabilities;
  - flexible work arrangements;
  - training/retraining of employees, who return to labour market after a break due to family reasons.
  - career break
  - additional services provided by company for fathers/mothers who are in paternity/maternity/child care breaks
  - Other type (describe)
- year of good practice
- origin of good practice in enterprise and sources of financial support (is it initiated by enterprise itself or by some external institution/project)

## 2.3 Good practice description

How and why the good practice under evaluation promotes family-friendly practices at workplaces:

- in its goals
- in the procedure and the methods it follows
- with its results

## 2.4 Is the good practice still in use or was it onetime social experiment?

## III. Recommendations for quality standards for training materials and for the content of the training materials